

JOHN CALLENDER'S ORATION.

Key



AN
ORATION,
PRONOUNCED
JULY 4, 1797,
AT THE
REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS
OF THE
TOWN OF BOSTON,
IN
COMMEMORATION
OF THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY JOHN CALLENDER.

OH! could I worship aught beneath the skies,
That earth hath seen, or fancy could devise;
Thine altar, sacred LIBERTY, should stand
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.

COWPER.

BOSTON:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY BENJAMIN EDES,
Killy-Street, 1797.



*At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the
Town of BOSTON, duly qualified and legally warned, in
public Town-Meeting, assembled at Faneuil-Hall, on Tuesday
the 4th Day of JULY, A. D. 1797*

V O T E D,

THAT the SELECTMEN be and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on **JOHN CALLENDER**, Esq. and in the Name of the Town to thank him for the spirited and elegant ORATION this Day delivered by him, at the Request of the Town, upon the ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—in which, according to the Institution of the Town, he considered the Feelings, Manners, and Principles which led to that great National Event—and to request of him a Copy thereof for the Press.

Attest,

WILLIAM COOPER, Town Clerk.

GENTLEMEN,

THE polite Request of my Fellow-Citizens, consign to the Press, the ORATION which was yesterday honor'd with their candid attention.

With sentiments of respectful consideration

and esteem,

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient

and very humble servant,

JOHN CALLENDER,

JULY 5th, 1797.

SELECTMEN of BOSTON.

AN
ORATION.

THE ingenuity of man diligently searches for the authority of precedent, to sanction the propriety of a favorite measure; but the revolution which produced the chearful hilarity of this day is entitled to our grateful commemoration, not from a servile imitation of ancient customs, but from its own abstract and intrinsic merits. The preservation of our independence is intimately connected with a preservation of those sentiments and opinions which gave birth to it, and the experience of one and twenty years affords an ample conviction that the spirit which animated our countrymen at the glorious epoch we celebrate, still warms our bosoms—nor has an uninterrupted enjoyment of the desired boon, lessened in our view its inestimable value. Those testimonies of lively recollection which have mark'd each successive return of this anniversary, unequivocally

rally demonstrate that time has not cooled the fervid glow of patriotism, which characterized the ever memorable period of seventy-six.

“THE feelings, manners and principles” which led three millions of our species disdainfully to repel the insidious approaches of tyranny, form a subject for sublime speculation and dignified discussion—the frequent elegance and ability, however, with which it has been treated, preclude every attempt at originality; scarce leave a novelty of expression to the speaker of the present day. But the joyous festivity of the occasion and the impressive candor which beams from every countenance instruct me that the severity of criticism has no part in the object of this assembly.

THE baleful spirit of religious persecution which chased our forefathers from the land of their nativity, compelled them to take refuge in the dens and caverns of a wilderness—greatly preferring the inhospitable wilds of America with freedom of sentiment, to the luxurious abodes of cultivated Europe when shackled by oppression. Here then we discover the source from which arose that delicacy of feelings, that purity of manners, that rigid inflexibility of principles which gave

gave birth to our admirable republic. Degenerate indeed must have been their offspring had they suffer'd the hand of tyranny, to stifle in *their* bosoms, the glowing spirit of such progenitors. It were needless to repeat the various perils which our settlers encountered in their infant establishment; to describe a warfare with the treacherous inhabitant of the woods, novel in its manner, and cruel in its conduct. Suffice it, that under every impression of difficulty and danger, still their settlements flourished; and by progressive improvement, became at the commencement of the present century, the strongest arm of the British empire. The inhabitants of the, then, American colonies, were filled with sentiments of loyalty to their king and veneration for the constitution of Great Britain. Thanks to the foolish policy of her ministers, those sentiments so inimical to our national grandeur were not permitted to remain.

MANY oppressive acts of government had inspired the people of America, with the most dreadful apprehensions. The safety of those darling rights and privileges for which they were ready to sacrifice their lives, appear'd imminently endangered. Still, however, they entertain'd a
lively

lively hope that a submissive deportment and a modest representation of their grievances would obtain from the justice and generosity of the parent country, ample reparation for injuries which they had sustained, and security against the infliction of others, in future. But the humble petitions of America were answered with insult, her agents treated with the foulest contempt, and the right of taxing us "in all cases whatever," at length, avowed as a principle equitable in itself, and strictly conformable to the political constitution of Great-Britain. A declaration at once so oppressive and absurd, discover'd to America the precipice on which she stood. The tyrannic measures of a British ministry, and the obsequious devotion of a British parliament, roused in every breast a merited detestation of the government, and a resolute determination to resist.

THE agents employed in the favorite plan of subjugating the colonies endeavor'd not by lenient measures, to mould and fashion the minds of the people to their purposes; but a system of terror and intimidation appear'd to promise a more speedy success and more permanent effects. Un-
awed however by the threats, and undismayed by the many outrages which they suffer'd, the inhabitants

AN ORATION.

bitants of the different States, associating more intimately in the hour of danger, discovered ample resources in that spirit of unanimity which pervaded all ranks of society, and determined by a decisive declaration of their Independence to shiver the disgraceful manacles of slavery which were prepared for them. How august is the spectacle which they exhibited to the world. An infant nation struggling against the full grown strength of an ancient and powerful monarchy ; having in vain attempted by the force of reason and entreaty to obtain redress from their haughty tyrants, solemnly announcing to mankind, their determination to be free or perish in the attempt. Uninfluenced by the trifling considerations of private interest ; unaffected by the singular peril of their situation ; surrounded by the fleets and armies of the foe, the representatives of America, in the presence of Almighty God, declare that the tyranny of the parent country had absolved them from all obligations of allegiance. That henceforth they were and of right ought to be, a free, sovereign and independent people. Thus having destroyed the possibility of reconciliation, it remain'd for them, to support with every effort of patriotism, a declaration announced, with such affecting solemnity.

HOWEVER

B

HOWEVER unprepared for warfare with antagonists so far their superiors in the deadly practice, still they shrunk not from the unequal contest. To the hardy veterans of Europe they opposed the rude untrained levies of the moment, the voluntary exertions of individuals and the sanctified justice of their cause. The only object they contemplated, was their country's freedom, the only efforts they employed, fair and honorable conflict in arms. No murderous proscription, traced the steps of our revolution, in the blood of assassinated brethren. No mockery of justice, made the difference of opinion a signal for execution. The American cause needed not the aid of such auxiliaries. Founded in justice, conducted with firmness and discretion, it ended in the most ample and unbounded success. Search the varied history of nations : analyse the discordant principles of government, the records of mankind afford not an instance of a revolution so important, effected with so few enormities. To the wise provisions of our venerable forefathers are we indebted for such salutary effects. Their early establishments for the education of youth rendered the attainment of knowledge easy to the poorest member of the community. Hence their rights were clearly understood, the blessings of genuine liberty ardently pursued and the visionary wanderings of its phantom most judiciously avoided. THAT

THAT our revolution was so little disgraced by cruelty and injustice much also is due to the exertions of our clergy, and it is with pride I here offer my humble tribute of applause to that devout and learned profession. The holy precepts of our religion which they inculcated, and the bright examples of virtue which they exhibited, gave them a great and merited influence with the people. To their eternal honour be it recorded, *that* influence exerted on the side of liberty and humanity, in a great measure restrained those wild excesses which have too frequently blasted in the execution, a cause designed by the noblest motives of the human mind.

HAVING obtain'd the glorious object of our contest, and wrung from the government of Great Britain, a tardy and reluctant acknowledgment of our Independence, the period which restor'd peace to our nation was replete also with danger. The system of Federation which had answered every purpose while we were under the impression of a foreign foe, was found totally inadequate to the intention, when that powerful incentive to union, was removed. The united wisdom of the continent was therefore summoned to devise a more eligible plan of national government. The production of this assembly of sages
was

was that happy combination of liberty and law, the Federal Constitution, under which we now exist; a work, which would have added reputation to the character of a Solon or Licurgus. And under whose genial influence the United States have advanced toward wealth and prosperity, with a rapidity unexampled in the annals of the world.

BUT while we contemplate with unfeigned joy the auspicious effects of our revolution, we cannot but observe with the most painful anxiety, that the mad fury of European politics threatens to cast a gloom o'er the bright prospects of our political horizon, and to involve us in the calamitous consequences of a war which hath already deluged with blood the fairest quarters of the globe.—The refusal of France to receive our minister, and her unprovoked depredations on our commerce teach us the instructive lesson, that national friendships and national partialities exist only in the distempered imagination of the enthusiastic theorist. This conduct is not only a violation of the law of nations, but an infraction of a treaty most solemnly ratified between us. The reason assign'd for such violent outrages is but an aggravation of the insult; and must excite the indignation

dignation of every American who has the discernment to perceive, or the sensibility that can feel, the wounded honor of his country.—Much has been said of the gratitude due to France for her assistance in the glorious revolution which we celebrate. The motives of this assistance it is unnecessary to develop. But the credit which she would derive from it, is justly lost in a systematic and insidious attempt to create dissensions between the people and constituted authorities of our country.—To individuals of the French nation we are indebted for great and important services. To the armies which fought by our sides we feel sentiments of grateful acknowledgment; nor shall the injustice of their country ever banish from our minds the sweet remembrance of their gallant deeds. While Frenchmen were contending for that liberty, which we so eminently enjoy, however we might disapprove the means, still on the grand principle we wished them success; we were their friends in reality not by profession, but their attempt to influence and distract our councils, has made a ravage in our friendship that cannot easily be forgotten. As an independent nation, the responsibility of our measures rests with us. *“ If we have committed errors and those can be demonstrated we shall be willing to correct them ;*

them ; if we have done injuries, we shall be willing, on conviction, to redress them,"—but the guardians of our own honor we cannot, will not, tamely submit to the imperious dictates of a foreign power.

THOSE native principles of liberty, which established will protect our independence and convince the intriguing politics of every nation, that between the people and government of America, there is not the shadow of distinction.

WHATEVER may be the event of negotiation, however desirous to maintain peace and amity with the French Republic, still it becomes us to be prepared for all events, and if the sad alternative must be unqualified submission to their will or opposition in arms, I will not insult the spirit and bravery of my countrymen by a doubt upon their choice—on a subject like this, we shall all be united. Away then with the ridiculous distinctions of party, we are Americans, and glorying in the character we swear to transmit it unfulled to posterity.

FROM a view of our foreign relations we cheerfully recur to the prosperous state of our domestic affairs, and permit me here, my fellow citizens, to congratulate you upon the late election to the chief magistracy of this Commonwealth. It is the
the

the singular felicity of governments constituted like ours, that offices of honor and trust are confided to those only whose merit has designated them the safe and dignified repository of the laws : at a period too when the venerable ADAMS, o'erplied with public energies, demands of his country a rest from his labors, it is with the highest satisfaction, that we contemplate in the character of his successor, those virtues which will adorn, those talents which will ably discharge, the important duties of his elevated station.

SINCE our last annual celebration of this great and glorious day, an event has occurred, which will give a striking example to mankind, of republican moderation and political integrity. That illustrious man whose Herculean arm strangled in the cradle of our liberties, the serpents of despotism and oppression ; having devoted to his country the most valuable moments of his life, voluntarily descends from the high and lofty station, which the voice of applauding millions had assigned him, and seeks in the bosom of retirement, to close a life, marked with the splendid characters of virtue, magnanimity and honor. Far is it above my feeble talent, to add a single sprig, to the wreaths of laurel, which adorn his brow, but while gratitude shall warm our hearts, while we
feel

feel the proud sentiment that we are the countrymen of WASHINGTON, let us aspire to heaven a prayer, that in his philosophic retirement, every joy and blessing of life may be accorded him ; that no dark cloud may obscure the mild radiance of his setting sun

“ And when old time shall lead him to his end,
Goodness and he fill up one monument.”

THE successor of Washington, it must be acknowledged, has a great and arduous task. Happy for our country her choice has fallen on a man whose long, laborious services, in times when every step was mark'd with danger and dismay, pronounce him fully adequate to the exigency of the case. If a profound knowledge in the science of government, a decisive firmness and intrepidity of conduct, a cool deliberating head and an honest feeling heart, are requisites to constitute the enlightened statesman ; the presidential chair of America will continue to exhibit that luminous display of patriotic virtue and dignified deportment which have rendered it the pride of our own country, the envied admiration of others.

AMERICANS ! we possess a country extensive and luxuriant. Nature has with a lavish hand bestowed upon it her choicest gifts. The prolific
bosom

A D O R A T I O N.

77

bosom of the earth chearfully yields a rich and copious harvest to the industrious exertions of her children. Our constitution, the result of our own deliberate choice, secures to us every right consistent with good order and the general welfare. What then, my friends, can disturb the full tide of our prosperity. Will foreign foes invade our peaceful shores, destroy the palladium of our liberties, and subject us to the insolent rapacity of a conqueror? We may defy the combined despots of the earth. Do we fear, lest ambition and the lust of power should establish on the ruin of our republic, a haughty dominion of aristocracy? Dread it not, the American nation clearly understands and vigilantly guards its rights; the attempt would be ridiculous, the consequent failure inevitable. But while we are secure from such attempts, let us beware that our liberty degenerate not into licentiousness. Here is the destroying angel of republics. Let us therefore cautiously avoid that spirit of jealousy which leads to everlasting innovation; that spirit which disappointed politicians and discontented demagogues will invariably convert to the purposes of faction and disorder. A government like ours rests on the broad basis of public opinion; give it then the full energy of your influence, and suffer no impediment

C
diment

AN ORATION.

diment to check the constitutional rotation of its wheels. The federal constitution preserved on its grand principle, the strict union of the states; a sedulous attention to the character of your public servants and a strict regard to morality and the education of youth, will enable you to baffle the intrigues of pretended friends, successfully to oppose the attacks of open enemies and perpetuate to generations yet unborn, those blessings for which you have toiled and bled.

Thus happy in the enjoyment of all those rights and privileges, which render life desirable, we cannot but lament that a very large proportion of the discover'd world, still languishes under the lash of oppression. That in many countries, where the richest luxuriance of soil and most inviting salubrity of climate prevail, the inhabitants, enveloped in more than monkish ignorance, hold their lives and property subject to the wretched possessions of some human monster. In others, a stupid veneration even for the follies and vices of antiquity, have opposed an almost insurmountable barrier to the introduction of learning or improvement. But in the eye of reason, it is clearly demonstrable, that the divine influence of genuine liberty must ultimately prevail

prevail ; and to this period of darkness will succeed, a corruscation of light that will penetrate the deepest recesses of bigotry and ignorance. Nothing will more tend to produce this desired event than the liberal dissemination of those principles upon which the rational system of *our* liberty is predicated. The towering flight of the American eagle, hath already described in the political horizon, the glorious path to freedom and independence. May the nations of the earth profit by the brilliancy of the example. We fondly cherish the hope that the auspicious moment will arrive, when the great orb of day, shall not, with his genial rays, illumine a single corner of this globe, which feels the hand of Tyranny or acknowledges the power of a master. Then will the consequences which have flowed and will continue to flow from our revolution, be duly appreciated. Then will the applauding world, with joy record, the period which gave it birth ; and this day, so grateful to our feelings, so honorable to our nation, shall universally be celebrated as the grand jubilee of LIBERTY.

F I N I S.



44

1992